OLE MARSTER AND OTHER VERSES

BENJAMIN BACHELDER VALENTINE

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/olemarsterotherv0000unse

1st 1
6 —
mD

OLE MARSTER
AND OTHER VERSES

THE VALENTINE MUSEUM
RICHMOND, VIRGINIA

OLE MARSTER

AND OTHER VERSES

By

BENJAMIN B. VALENTINE

RICHMOND, VA.
WHITTET & SHEPPERSON, PRINTERS
1921

COPYRIGHT, 1921
BY THE VALENTINE MUSEUM

From the Press of Whittet & Shepperson
Richmond, Va.

To My Wife
Lila Meade Valentine

CONTENTS

	PAGE
Foreword	9
Ole Marster	13
Keep er-grinnin'	22
De ole Fiddler	25
Study'n' 'bout Chris'mus	29
Chris'mus in my Bones	32
De ole battered Banjo	33
Waitin' in de Sunshine	35
Ize bound fer Ole Hanover	37
Bresh 'em 'Way	39
De Hoe-cake Walk	41
Study'n' how ter keep frum Gittin' Shook Down	44
Grasshoppers	46
De Shuckin' o' de Corn	48
Uncle Joe	50
Little Mistiss	53
Mammy's Charge	56
After the War	58
The Race Question	60
Reconstruction	64
The Pessimist	66
Ruminations	68
Contentment	70
The Point of View	71
The Duck	75
The King Corn Man	78
The Travellers	80
De Pot whar call' de Kittle Black	84

Monologues

Aunt Dinah at the Fair 91
Dat Boy 94
The March of the Lodges 98
Speech of the Rev. Gabriel Gizzardfort on the Celebration of the Fourteenth Commandment 101
Astronomical Observations 105
Dat 'Lec'ric Cyar 109
Seeing the Circus 112
A Fire Insurance Policy 115

Foreword

SOUTHERN negroes brought up by "Ole Marster" and "Ole Mistis," and even descendants of these dear, dark folk who inherited their character, manners, speech and devotion to "we all's white folks" are rapidly becoming mere tradition, and with them is passing from the American scene something vital, something precious. Time never was when they could have been understood, much less interpreted by any not of the soil and to the manner born—by which is meant the white people who were associated with them in a relation unique then and impossible now, whom they loved and served and who loved and served them.

The survival long after The War Between the States of many instances of this relation enabled a later day to know and appreciate these humble but interesting folk. A Virginian who possessed a supreme gift for interpreting them so that through his work they will live always in a world which he himself has left, was Benjamin Batchelder Valentine.

Both nature and circumstances fitted him for the work. To inherited gifts of heart and mind was added liberal culture, both intellectual and spiritual. During his formative years an ample home—an old and storied Richmond mansion, whose rooms were filled with books and treasures of artistic and sentimental value—provided the setting for wholesome family life. It was

a home to which faithful colored folk contributed comfort and dignity—a home in whose walled garden flowers bloomed and the laughter of the children of the house and their dusky playfellows from the servants' quarters mingled with song of bird and plash of fountain.

The head of this house was comrade, guide and example to his sons. To his servants he was the friend and protector who inspired loyalty. He would have been in earlier days an ideal "Ole Marster."

In such an environment Benjamin Batchelder Valentine learned to "know by heart" the old-time colored folk. To see and hear him impersonate them was an unforgettable experience. His interpretations were always in verse, but they were no ordinary dialect verse. Under the quaint humor which bubbled on their surface flowed a deep current whose echo could be heard in his mellow, lilting voice, for all its contagious chuckles, and which could be glimpsed in his expressive eyes for all their merry twinkling—showing that with fine imagination, with sympathy amounting to genius, he felt at once the picturesque traits of his subjects which shallower interpreters are prone to caricature and their mental and spiritual processes. Whether or not the philosophy which was a marked characteristic of these simple souls was an original development or was imbibed from their "white folks" and passed on in intensified form to their "white folks' " children, is impossible to say, but as seen in the work of "Ben Valentine" it is as typical of the interpreter as of the interpreted. Each portrait in the gal-

lery which his negro verse comprises is sketched with unerring touch from some point of vantage peculiar to itself, and the whole thus presents, as nearly complete as could be within bounds so circumscribed, a visualization of a vanishing race.

Here are flawlessly reproduced its terse and engaging phrase, its ingenious vocabulary; here are its original whimsicalities and delightful absurdities. All of this is well worth preserving, but here is, in addition, something more subtle, more salient—its philosophy, whose interpretation was to "Ben Valentine" as spontaneous as breathing, being his own.

In "Keep a Grinnin'," for instance, he was picturing the attitude toward life of the old-time colored person of Virginia, but he was also describing out of his own heart the cheerful face which he—like that passing figure—had learned, with a grit which was heroic, with a trust in God which was sublime, to turn upon adversity. Adversity in his case meaning a long battle with illness which brought him down at the flush of life in a world which to him was always radiant, for it reflected his own radiant spirit, and ended that life when it was still in its prime.

Mary Newton Stanard.

OLE MARSTER

Fotch in some mo' de big logs, Sam—hyer nigger,
shet dat doh—
My Marster! how de snow come down an' how de
win' do blow!
Dem draughts through dat 'ar broken pane gwine kill
me, dat dey is,
Dey's blowin' right squar' on de place whar' I got
rheumatiz.

Pitch on de lot er light-wood chips, an' poke dat
fire ergain,
Please stuff yo' mammy's petticoat in dat 'ar
broken pane,
An tek de skillet off de hook—dat chimley's got ter
draw.
My! but dis snow is mighty like dat snow befo' de
war!

It meks me kind er creepy-like ter heah dat howlin'
win';
It soun' like critters in de cole er-whinin' ter git in,
An' dem big gusts dey waves de pines an' keeps 'em
moanin' so—
Jes' listen! ain't dat folks whar's los' er-hollerin'
"Yo-o-o"?

'Tain' nothin'—I wuz wand'rin, Son, 'way back ter fifty-six,
I clean fergot 'bout dis hyer time an' all de years ertwix.
Ole folks don' need no mem'ry strings ter call ole times ter min',
Dey jes' finds written on dey hearts de tallies o' de time.

Dat night Ole Marster sent me roun' ter see de critters housed,
Kase, as de overseer wuz sick, he didn' want him 'roused,
An' when I got back frum my roun's, I wuz er shiverin' so,
I come nigh gwine in de hall fo' I stomp off de snow.

I see folks in de dinin'-room, so I went back in dyar
Ter 'port ter Marster whar I'd been, an' how de critters fyar.
Dat room ain' need no candle light, nor Suh, de big fire dorgs
Hel' out dey brass arms chock right full er blazin' hic'ry lorgs,

An' on de rug befo' de fire, enjoyin' er de heat,
Blin' Ponto, kind er drowsy-like, lay stretch' at Marster's feet,
An' Mistiss wuz er-sittin' on er cricket by his side
Er-heah'in Marster tell about de time she wuz er bride.

Dey saw dat I wuz nigh 'bout friz, frum trampin' in de storm,
So dey jes' kep' me by de fire 'till I felt nice an' warm;
An' Mistiss know'd what niggers like; she fotch' some bread an' ham,
An' den, ter warm dem vittals up, she pour' me out er dram.

You'll 'scuse me tellin' such as dat an' ramblin' frum de trac',
But Marster kep' de kin' er dram folks always raccolac';
Besides, dem vittals an' dat dram wuz mighty useful too,
I needed all de strength dey gin befo' dat night wuz through.

Jes' time I tuk dat drink I hear er big fuss in de hall,
An' Lindy Smith bus' in de room er-hollerin' fo' us all:
"Lord, Marster! He'p me git my chile, she gwine die, sart'in sho',
"Lord, Marster! Fin' my little gal whar's los' out in de snow!

When I wuz 'way her drunken pa sent her off ter de sto',
An' now she's been de Lord knows whar', nigh 'bout three hours or mo'!"
Wid dat she drap right down an' mourn like she done gone distrac',
An' Mistiss knelt an' smooth her haid an bring her senses back.

Ole Marster fotch' his big slouch hat an' his tall hic'ry stick;
He made me git his lantern out an' trim an' light de wick;
An' time he put his thick boots on, an' button' up his coat,
Ole Mistiss had his muffler warm an' tuck it roun' his throat.

He wuz er mighty likely man—nigh on ter six foot three—
An' hel' hisself, at sixty-five, as straight as straight could be;
He look' de gen'ral in his cloak, one han' thrus' in his bres',
His long cape flap flung careless 'cross his shoulder an' his ches'.

De win' wuz high when we went out; de snow whirl' roun' an' roun';
It pour' down on us frum de clouds; den blew up frum de groun'.
'Peared like de sperits er de a'r wan' fight us han' ter han',
An' ev'y sperit in de fight had tuk ter flingin' san'.

I see right now de home lights fade; I heah Ole Marster speak:—
"You search de main road; I will take de pathway 'cross de creek.
Be careful; 'zamine all de road; zig-zag frum side ter side.
You are not likely ter git los', de fence will be yo' guide."

Dar 'twuz—de marster tuk de path, de nigger tuk de road—
Dar wan' no fence ter guide him by, an' dat Ole Marster know'd.
'Twuz like de blue-blood cappen man ter take de dang'ous lead,
An' do it like twa' nothin' 'tall 'cep' nat'ral ter his breed.

I tuk de road, but sech er time I never had befo';
My light went out an' I jes' grope an' couldn' see ter go.
At las' I cotch hol' er de fence, but I wuz so turn' roun'
I didn' know which way wuz up er which er-way wuz down.

I got so col' dat I would fall—somehow I didn' cyar—
I jes' would wonder: "Whar is I, an' what's I doin' dyar?"
I 'spose dat I wuz gittin' friz an' in de sleepy state,
And dar an' den I stumble' 'pon de horse-block by de gate;

Dat wuz er mons'us 'couragement—it woke me up
right smart;
It made me notice in de snow er light dat made me
start.
De red er fire wuz in de a'r, de glow wuz nigh an'
far,
I couldn' tell whar it was at, bekase 'twuz ev'ywhar.

I 'spicioned dat de great-house den wuz gwine in er
blaze,
An' so I wuk' my way erlong, do' I wuz mighty
daze';
I thought: "My Mistiss mout git bu'nt—de Lord
knows what gwine 'cur—
But ef dis nigger dies ter-night he wan' ter die fer
her."

'Fo' long I see, nigh ter de house, dey'd built er big
bon-fire,
An' folks wuz bringin' wood an' stuff ter set it
blazin' higher;
Wet logs wuz pull' frum 'neath de snow, an' pitch'
upon de pile,
But in dat win' dey bu'nt up quick like dey wuz soak'
wid ile.

Dat fire wuz built ter guide us by, an' sence I'd
gotten home,
We all wuz 'spectin' any time ter see Ole Marster
come.
All through de night de bon-fire bu'nt; we call,' an'
wander' roun';
We stood an' listen' fer er voice, but never heah'd er
soun'.

Befo' de dawn de snow hilt up, bekase de win' had
veer',
An' by sun-up de clouds had lif' an' lef' de mornin'
clear,
Yet still de win' wuz blowin' hard, an' drif's wuz
ev'ywhar,
Dey'd pile an' pile up fer er spell, den leave de
places byar.

We took ter searchin' 'bout de creek, er-huntin' up
an 'down,
An' in de bushes on de edge Ole Marster's hat wuz
foun'.
I den made sho' dat, in de dark, he'd fallen frum de
bank
An' plunge' inter de freezin' stream, an' dis wuz whar
he sank.

But sudden-like, Big Aaron call', an' time I tu'n an' look,
He threw his han's up 'fo' his eyes, an' hid his face an' shook,
An' when I got whar he wuz at, 'bout knee deep in de snow,
He p'inted 'round' but didn' speak, he wuz er-cryin' so.

Dyar lay Ole Marster in de drif', stretch' out like he wuz 'sleep;
One han' wuz holdin' tight his cape dat covered up er-heap,
An' as I lif' dat icy cape, while Aaron gave de 'larm,
Dar wuz Sis' Lindy's little gal, dead, in Ole Marster's arm.

Put down dis pipe an' han' me, Son, dat Bible off de shelf—
Hi! dese hyer specs keep gettin' wet—you'll have ter read yo'self.
Turn ter my chapter; read me dat 'fo' I lay down ter res';
It's 'bout de Shepherd an' de sheep out in de wilderness.

KEEP ER-GRINNIN'.

When you heah "Ole Tribberlation" come er tyarin' down de road,
An' you know he gwine ter kotch you an' you got ter byar de load;
When you feel his bridle pullin', an' de saddle on yo' back,
An' de whip is wavin' roun' you, an' er hittin', ev'y crack—
Den remember 'bout de possum whar wuz settin' on de lim',
Wid de gun er p'intin' at him, an' de dorgs er treein' him;
How he holler ter de hunter an' he holler ter de houn':
"Ize er gwin'ter keep er-grinnin', doh I spec' you'll fotch me down."

When you studies 'bout de bizness whar you's vested ev'y cent,
An' you see de sheriff comin' fer ter en' de argyment—
When yo' neighbors tek ter biddin' on yo' cabin an' yo' corn,

An' de auctioneer's er-holl'rin': "It's er gwine! gwine! gone!"
Den remember 'bout de possum whar wuz settin' on de lim',
Wid de gun er p'intin' at him, an' de dorgs er treein' him;
How he holler ter de hunter an' he holler ter de houn':
"Ize er gwin'ter keep er-grinnin', doh I spec' you'll fotch me down."

When you long has love er lady an' de time you's been er-part
She's er kep' er writin' ter you: "You's de honey uv my heart."
When you take an' draws yo' wages, an' you hurry an' you has'e,
An' you finds er-nother gem'man wid his arm er-roun' her wase—
Den remember 'bout de possum whar wuz settin' on de lim',
Wid de gun er p'intin' at him, an' de dorgs er treein' him;
How he holler ter de hunter an' he holler ter de houn':
"Ize er gwin'ter keep er-grinnin', doh I spec' you'll fotch me down."

When you feels er mighty mis'ry an' yo' stomach's
kinder bent,
An' de doctor starts ter projec' wid de cuttin' in-
stru-ment;
When he lays you on de table an' er standin' by yo'
side,
He's er-twitchin' an' er-itchin' ter be whittlin' up
yo' hide—
Den remember 'bout de possum whar wuz settin' on de
lim',
Wid de gun er p'intin' at him, an' de dorgs er treein'
him;
How he holler ter de hunter an' he holler ter de
houn':
*"Ize er gwin'ter keep er-grinnin', doh I spec' you'll
fotch me down."*

DE OLE FIDDLER.

De moon peeps through de winder, it lights de cabin wall,
It falls 'pon top de fiddle, an' voices 'pear ter call;
Dey soun' like far off people—like sperits in de moon,
Whar want de ole-time fiddler ter play er ole-time chune.

I heahs you callin', callin'. Yas Marsters, I gwine go—
Dis han' is mons'us trim'lin', it sca'ce can hol' de bow,
But I'll go ter de great-house, an' po'ly doh I feel,
I'll play fer you dis Chris'mus, de ole "Virginny Reel."

Hyer I is, 'twix' de pillars, de fiddle in my han',
De moonlight streamin' on me, befo' de doh I stan';
De big oak grove is roun' me, de low-grounds lie in sight,
An' home, an' fields, an' hillsides gwine heah de Reel ternight.

Ah me! dem moonlit winders—dem 'flections on de pane—
Dey 'claims de fire is lighted, de folks is home ergain;
An' dem long limbs er-tappin' like feet dat trippin' go,
Dey says de folks is comin' ter dance de Reel once mo'.

Dem mus' be mo' 'en shadows whar move erbout de walk,
Dem mus' be mo' 'en pine trees whar talk dat lovers' talk;
An' dat ar soun' like satin, er-rustlin' 'cross er floh,
Sho' dat ain' dead leaves stirrin' er-roun' de shet up doh.

'Tain' jes' er spell whar's on me—I ain' jes' crazy ole—
I say de house ain' empty, de rooms ain' dark an' col'.
Can't I heah ladies talkin'? Can't I see all de light?
Ain' dis me an' de fiddle? Ain' dis hyer Chris'mus night?

Dey's come! Dey's come fer Chris'mus, all dem whar
went erway;
Dey's callin' fer de fiddler, dey wants ter heah him
play.
I'll meet 'em an' I'll greet 'em—I'll 'scort 'em ter de
floh—
Dis bow an' string gwine fyarly sing de Chris'mus
chunes once mo'.

Git out hyer banjo-nigger, fling 'way dat plunkin'
thing!
I cuts an' calls de figger, de fiddle is de king.
Jes' heah him talkin' tender, jes' heah his laughin'
ring;
Prepyar yo' feet fer pattin', de fiddle's gwin'ter
sing.

Choose yo' partners, gem'men all—gem'men all—
gem'men all—
Choose yo' partners, gem'men all—partners fer de
ball.
Tek yo' little sweetheart's han', tek an' hol' it
while you can,
Doh she 'bleege' ter blush an' start wid de flut-
t'rin' er de heart—
Dat ar heart you gwin'ter steal when she dances in de
Reel.
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel—fiddlers feel—fiddlers
feel—
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel when dey play de Reel.

Fus' two ladies down de lane —down de lane—down de lane—
Fus' two ladies down de lane—han's ercross an' back ergain—
Den de gem'men does de same, dat's de way ter play de game.
Gallavantin', flirtin', courtin', trippin', tippin', fyarly floatin',
Light as wind on toe an' heel, dat's de way ter dance de Reel.
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel—fiddlers feel—fiddlers feel—
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel when dey play de Reel.

Ev'y body march er-roun'—march er-roun'—march er-roun'—
Ev'y body march er-roun'—steppin' ter de fiddle's soun'
'Till yo' own true loves is foun'—kase you'll fin' 'em I be boun'.
Who-some-ever you mout seen, whar-some-ever you mout been,
You gwine meet 'em at de en'—meet yo' true loves, gentlemen.
Den de weddin' bells gwine peal at de endin' er de Reel.
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel—fiddlers feel—fiddlers feel—
Oh! how happy fiddlers feel when dey play de Reel.

STUDY'N' 'BOUT CHRIS'MUS.

De Chris'mus uv de good ole times
Is gone, an' dat's er fac';
'Tain' nothin' 'tall dat I knows er
Gwine bring dat Chris'mus back.

De niggers an' de white-folks now
Is drif'in' wide erpart,
An' love whar 'sisted 'twix' de two
Is done desart de heart.

De niggers does like dey don' cyar;
De white-folks 'pear ter say:
"While we walks 'long on dis hyer paf
You go 'long dat er way."

'Tain' no Ole Mistiss now ter please;
'Tain' no Ole Marster's han'
Ter 'spense ter darkies roun' de place
De fatness er de lan.

'Tain' no big smoke-house, chock right full
Er ham an' chine an' side,
Ner celler whar de 'lasses flow,
An' sperits allus bide.

'Tain' no mo' rations I kin draw,
Ner clothes g'in me ter w'ar,
'Tain' no white-folks gwi' mek aig-nogg
An' save dis nigger's shar'.

Ole Mistiss done it, dat she did,
She dip it out de bowl
An' say: "Hyer, Silas, have er glass,
De night is ve'y col'.

An' tek dis other ter Aun' Jane—
Don't tas'e it, 'strain yo'self;
I wants her too, at Chris'mus time,
Ter drink her Marster's helf."

'Twuz mons'us hard ter cyar dat glass
Fur as de cabin doh,
Kase once you tas'es dat aig-nogg
You gwine ter wan' some mo'.

An' Satan, too, keep temp'in' me;
He try ter mek me think
Dat half er glass sho' is ernough
Fer women-folks ter drink.

But whar's de use uv dealin' wid
De things an' times gone by—
It jes' he'ps mek young niggers mad,
An' ole ones wan' ter cry.

But how-some-never dat mout be,
I hol' it ain' no crime
Ter miss dem things I use' ter git
At dat ole Chris'mus time.

Ef I had fifty cents dis night
I'd burn dat Chris'mus lorg;
I'd git de milk an' beat de aigs,
An' mek me some aig-nogg,

An' time I got dem 'gredients mix'
I'd lif' de glass, like dis—
An' tek an' drene it ter de drugs
In 'membrance ter "Ole Miss."

CHRIS'MUS IN MY BONES.

I done sold my load er hay,
I done gone an' got de pay,
I ain' gwine ter wuk ter-day—
Chris'mus in my bones.

Dis hyer jug is full er rum,
'Pears like Ize er-needin' some,
Yas! I 'spec' de time done come—
Chris'mus in my bones.

I hyers you gwine Glug! Glug! Glug!
I don' need ter use no mug,
I gwine fling 'way dis hyer plug—
Chris'mus in my bones.

Dat's de stuff whar drowns yo' cyar,
Dat's de juice whar makes you r'ar,
Ize so happy! Wah! Hoop-la—
Chris'mus in my bones.

Nor Suh, Marster! Who drunk? *Me?*
Ize ez straight ez straight kin be.
'Pears right strange dat you cyan' see—
Chris'mus in my bones.

DE OLE BATTERED BANJO.

When lone, 'fo' de fire, I sets in de evenin',
An' studies 'bout pictures I sees in de flame,
I feels like Ize back on Ole Marster's plantation,
An' lives wid de darkies at quarters again.
I smells de cook' possum, I tastes de roas' 'taters;
I sees de gals grinnin' an' dancin' wid joy;
An 'den I reach out fer ter finger de banjo,
De ole battered banjo I played when a boy.
De sweet singin' banjo, de clear ringin' banjo,
De ole battered banjo I played when a boy.

I 'low dat dat banjo wan' much fer ter look at,
Kase niggers an' chillun done handle' it rough,
But Marster an' Mistiss dey love fer ter heah it,
An' playin' fer dem two wuz pleasure sho 'nuff.
Fer all de big parties an' dances an' weddin's
Dis nigger de whi' folks would allus employ,
An' how dey did dance when dey heah me a pickin'
De ole battered banjo I played when a boy.
De fun flingin' banjo, de gal slingin' banjo,
De ole battered banjo I played when a boy.

Oh, gone is de days uv de dancin' an' singin';
De quarters is ruin', de great house is clos';
An' whar, in de ole times, de music wuz ringin'
De high grass is growin' 'roun' shet cabin dohs.
De banjo's head's bu'sted, de strings is all broken,
De chilluns done taken its frame fer a toy;
An' all de sweet voices whar j'ined in our chorus
Is hush' like de banjo I played when a boy.
De low sobbin' banjo, de tear bringin' banjo,
De ole battered banjo I played when a boy.

Written for Polk Miller and sung by him. Music by Jacob Reinhardt.

WAITIN' IN DE SUNSHINE.

De darkies all have wandered, an' lef' me hyer behind;
Dey wuz talkin' 'bout me might'ly, an' dey claim I los' my mind,
For dey say I wuz de bigges' fool-nigger dey ever saw,
Jes' kase I love de good white folks whar live befo' de war.

CHORUS:

Gone, gone is all frum out de quarters an' de Hall;
Gone, gone, de laughin' an' de joy.
As I sets hyer in de sun, my mind still studies 'pon
Dem happy, happy times gone by.

I ain' got no mo' strength fer ter hill de growin' corn,
An' I feels so mons'us po'ly dat I wakes befo' de morn,

An' I has a kind o' 'spicion dat I'll lose my hyerin' soon
Kase I never heahs ole Ranger doh dey say he bays de moon.

CHORUS:
Gone, gone, etc.

Ize settin' hyer an' waitin' to kotch de welcome soun'
O' de angel dat will tek me whar de 'ternal res' is foun',
An' I ain't afeared ter foller kase I know he'll tek me sho',
An' Ize gwine ter keep on waitin' in de sunshine 'fo' de doh.

CHORUS:
Gone, gone, etc.

IZE BOUN' FER "OLE HANOVER."

Ize boun' fer "Ole Hanover", I live' dyar 'fo' de war;
Dyar's whar Ize had he happies' times dis nigger ever saw.
I knows de roads is miry, de creeks is runnin' high,
But down ter "Ole Hanover" I'll git, 'cep' 'tis I die.

I ain' got time ter projec', Ize 'bleege ter git erlong;
Ize 'feared the dark will kotch me, an' some'n mout go wrong.
I done heah tell dat sperits roams roun' de swamp er nights,
De sperits er dem soldiers whar git kill' in de fights.

I dunno what dey does dyar, or what dey gwine ter say,
But you jes' heah me, honey, I wan' keep out de way.
Dey's fit once kase er niggers, an', I don' cyar who win,
I don' wan' no contention 'bout dis hyer nigger 'gin.

I knows I ain' got nothin' on 'count er dat ar war,
'Cep' 'tis dey allus gins me de full 'stent er de law.
In all er sech contentions what is de bone gwine get?
It 'pears like, mos' in gin'ral, de bone is gwine be et.

But sence I talks er eatin', I jes' wan' let you know
Dat down in "Ole Hanover" is de place fer vittals, sho'.
Dey's allus killin' chickens, dey eats 'em ev'y day,
Dey's got so much fri' chicken dey flings de tough ones 'way.

An' as fer watermillons, dey's big ez ever grew;
Ize got ter see dat nigger whar handles mo' 'en two.
Dese little eight-cent millons folks sells up in de town,
Down dyar dey's same ez nubbins and chillun kicks 'em roun'.

Ize got ter be er-movin', Ize ridin' "Shanks's myar,"
Jes' kotch dat smell er vittals dey's cookin' way down dyar.
Ize comin', "Ole Hanover," I let you know Ize glad—
Save me some dat fri' chicken, I wants it mons'us bad.

BRESH 'EM 'WAY.

When you fus' heah de buzzin' er de blues,
Bresh 'em 'way!
It's er gwine ter tek heap mo' 'en sayin' "Shoos,"
Bresh 'em 'way!
Sence dey scratches an' dey fights,
An' you gits sick when dey bites,
Sock it ter 'em 'fo' dey lights,
Bresh 'em 'way!

CHORUS:

Bresh 'em 'way, oh my brother! Bresh 'em 'way!
Don' you let 'em cotch er holt o' you an' stay.
Wid dey sharp teef an' dey claws
Dey jes digs in you an' gnaws,
Bresh 'em 'way! Bresh 'em 'way! Bresh 'em 'way!

Time er lie start ter whisper, "Ize yo' man,"
Bresh it 'way!
Time it promise fer ter he'p you all it can,
Bresh it 'way!
Ef you let dat little lie
Git its wings an' start ter fly
It'll bite you bye-an'-bye.
Bresh it 'way!

CHORUS:
Bresh it 'way, etc.

When de drink holler ter you "Hyer's yo' fren'!"
Bresh it 'way!
When it tell you, "You's ez strong ez other men."
Bresh it 'way!
'Fo' you stumble an' you stutter,
'Fo' you's flung inter de gutter,
'Fo' you's los' yo' bread and butter,
Bresh it 'way!

CHORUS:
Bresh it 'way, etc.

Ef tem'tation come an' ax you, "How you does?"
Bresh it 'way!
When it say, "Ize been er-wond'rin' whar you wuz."
Bresh it 'way!
Doh er sof', sweet-talkin' critter,
Dat's er powerful hard hitter,
It's de devil's own man-gitter.
Bresh it 'way!

CHORUS:
Bresh it 'way, etc.

DE HOE-CAKE WALK.

De bull-frog jumps when he wants ter git erlong;
De mockin'-bird hops 'fo' he larn ter sing er song;
De ox is kinder willin' doh he gwine ter move slow,
But it teks er heap o' projic' ter mek er mule go.
Dem critters ain' lackin' in de natchul parts,
Dey jes' don' study 'fo' dey meks dey starts;
Chillun got ter think 'fo' dey knows how ter talk,
An' it teks edgycashun fer de Hoe-cake walk.
Hoe-cake walk! Hoe-cake walk!
Git edgycashun fer de Hoe-cake walk.

It gwine tek science, an' de way ter git de swing
Is ter keep er-totin' water on yo' haid frum de spring;
An' when you done cotch it you gwine meet yo' match
Till you totes watermillons on yo' haid frum de patch.
Balancin' dem millons is mons'us hard ter do,
But I kin tek an' tote 'em when I done eat two.
I jes' steps spry, an' I don' never balk.
O, I is de King o' de Hoe-cake walk.
Hoe-cake walk! Hoe-cake walk!
I is de King er de Hoe-cake walk.

You w'ars er white ves' fer ter git de right tone,
You 'bleege ter look proud like de earth wuz yourn,
  You smiles at de gals, an' you bows perlite
  Doh you's counted mighty danj'us when you gits
    inter er fight.
I step so sof', an' I tread so true,
De folks never 'spicions 'bout de razor in my shoe.
  Ef er nigger sass me he got ter walk chalk,
  I protects de ladies in de Hoe-cake walk.
    Hoe-cake walk! Hoe-cake walk!
    Gran' promernade fer de Hoe-cake walk.

De clos' I w'ars is all bran' new,
(I knows white-folks whar is lookin' fer 'em too),
  I gits my style frum de quality folks;
  I gits my fun out de almanac jokes;
I gits my strength out er eatin' hoe-cakes,
An' I gits my sperits out de sperits I takes,
  But de possum I tackles wid de knife an' fork
  Dat supples up de j'ints fer de Hoe-cake walk.
    Hoe-cake walk! Hoe-cake walk!
    Ile up de j'ints fer de Hoe-cake walk.

Fotch out dem gals, I want ter crown de queen;
Bring de likesomes' nigger whar ever wuz seen.
Her lily white han' she'll lay in mine,
An' de king an' de queen gwine march down de line.
I'll step ter de throne, an' set her dyar,
Fix blood-red roses in her kinky hyar;
Ter de soun' er de fiddle, an' de poppin' er de cork
I'll crown her de queen er de Hoe-cake walk.

Hoe-cake walk! Hoe-cake walk!
Crown her de queen er de Hoe-cake walk.

STUDY'N' HOW TER KEEP FRUM GITTIN' SHOOK DOWN.

When de win' blows hard an' de lim's all lurch
De bird is a bird whar kin stick ter de perch,
An' in dese times when we all gits jolts,
We's doin' mighty well jes' holdin' our holts,
Still ev'ybody wants fer ter clim' up de tree,
An' see fer deyselves what de "Tip-tops" see,
But time dat we reach ter de very fus' roun',
We's study'n' how ter keep frum gittin' shook down.
Gittin' shook down,
Gittin' shook down,
From de top o' de tree right plum' ter de groun',
We's study'n' how ter keep frum
Gittin'
Shook
Down.

In de ways we clim's an' de ways we clings
We sho is de kin o' de fo'-laig things,
An' gittin' ter groun', we jes' soon tread
On dis hyer one's ne'k er dat ar one's head;
An' pullin' folks' laigs, an' ridin' folks' backs,
Doh jumpin' an' joltin', we sticks ter de tracks,
But lookin' fer licks we don' sleep soun',
We's study'n' how ter keep frum gittin' shook down.

Gittin' shook down,
Gittin' shook down,
Frum de top o' de tree right plum' ter de groun',
We's study'n' how ter keep frum
Gittin'
Shook
Down.

GRASSHOPPERS.

Yas! I see de sporty butler whar is w'arin' white-folks' clothes,
An' I see too, dat perliceman whar is watchin' whar he goes—
Now er little bird done tol' me, an' he say it mighty nice:
"Dyar's er hoppergrass er-hoppin',
An' he hoppin' on de ice."

Ya-s! I know dat high up preacher whar has got his praises sung
Kase de realms er gloom an' glory he's er-'splorin' wid his tongue,
But er little bird done tol' me, an' he say it mighty nice:
"Dyar's er hoppergrass er-hoppin',
An' he hoppin' on de ice."

Y-a-s! Ize played dat crapshus nigger whar is got de dice an' cup,
An' he flung de seven erleven ev'y time he shake 'em up,
But er little bird done tol' me, an' he say it mighty nice:
"Dyar's er hoppergrass er-hoppin',
An' he hoppin' on de ice."

Y-a-s! Ize 'quainted wid de gem'man whar, ter
mek his sperits calm,
Slips erway frum home 'fo' bre'kfast fer ter git er
sip er dram,
But er little bird done tol' me, an' he say it mighty
nice:
"Dyar's er hoppergrass er-hoppin',
An' he hoppin' on de ice."

Y-a-s! It 'pears Ize flingin' brickbats, an' I 'spec'
I better quit,
Doh, er course, 'tain' none my hearers whar de caps
is gwine ter fit—
But er little bird done tol' me, an' he say it mighty
nice:
"You's er hoppergrass er-hoppin',
An' you's hoppin' on de ice."

DE SHUCKIN' O' DE CORN.

My brothers and my sisters,
  On dis sunny Sabbath morn
Ize in min' ter do some preachin'
  'Bout de Shuckin' o' de Corn,
An' Ize gwine ter mek it p'inted,
  An Ize gwine ter say it plain—
Dyar's er monst'us mess o' shuckin',
  But er mighty little grain.

Y'all knows de corn-stalk speakers
  Whar jes' spring up out de groun',
How dey shakes dey top-knot tassels
  Whar-some-never crowds is foun'.
Well, if y'all will tek an' shuck 'em,
  In de barn-house o' de brain—
Dyar's er monst'us mess o' shuckin',
  But er mighty little grain.

Y'all buys de Sunday papers
  Fer ter git de gwines-on;
How de rustle o' dat fodder
  Meks you 'spec' ter git some corn.
Well, on time de leaves is open,
  An' you gathers up yo' gain—
Dyar's er monst'us mess o' shuckin',
  But er mighty little grain.

Y'all goes down ter de cote-house
  Whar dey brings de folks ter taw,
An' you heahs er lot o' lawyers
  Keep er holl'rin' at de law,
An' ef den you calls de doctors
  Dey gwine projec' wid yo' pain—
Dyar's er monst'us mess o' shuckin',
  But er mighty little grain.

Now Ize name' de main 'lustrations,
  An' you knows Ize name' 'em true,
But befo' I ends dis 'pistle
  Ize er-p'intin' it at you;
So, er standin' hyer, I axes:
  "Is de sunshine an' de rain
Jes' er-makin' you all shuckin's
  Or er-pilin' up yo' grain?"

My brothers and my sisters,
  Jes' ez sho' ez you is born,
Right behin' yo' backs, folks shuck you
  All de same ez shuckin' corn,
An' ef you is little nubbins,
  Den yo' growin's all in vain;
Folks ain' gwine count yo' shuckin's;
  Dey's er-gwine ter count yo' grain.

UNCLE JOE.

Young Marster, please don' call me "Brown,"
Don' say it any mo',
Wid my white-folks I ain' name dat,
I jes' is "Uncle Joe."

I knows you wan' ter be perlite,
An' thought I'd like it too,
But when you used dat titlement
It didn' soun' like you.

I 'lows I likes fer color'd folks
Ter call me "Brother Brown,"
It soun' like Ize er-gittin' up
Instid er drappin' down.

An' when I gits in my black clos',
Puts on my beaver hat,
Er han's de plate erbout in chu'ch,
I feels whar I is at.

It sho does mek me kinder proud
Ter stan' an' look er-roun',
An' heah de sisters whisperin',
"Jes' look at Deacon Brown."

But when de flick'rin' cabin fire
  Shows faces in de glow,
I sets an' studies 'bout de ones
  Whar call me "Uncle Joe."

I raccolec' when you wuz small,
  An' I wuz gittin' on,
But I wuz still what I call young,
  Doh fifty years wuz gone.

I tuk an' hel' you on my knee;
  Wuz tellin' you 'bout byars;
When you saw', shinin' in my haid,
  De very fus' grey hyars.

You ax' me den, how ole I wuz,
  You talk so grave an' slow,
An' when I tol' you "fifty years,"
  You call' me "Uncle Joe."

Dat come jes' like er blessin' Suh,
  It soun' like we wuz kin;
It made me feel dat love wuz deep—
  Heap deeper den de skin.

An' what you call' me folks tuk up,
  Miss Jane, an' Sue, an' May;
Seem like dey all wuz claimin' kin,
  A new one ev'y day.

Gawd bless dey little chillun hearts.
I lov'd 'em, dat dey knowed,
An' I b'leeve dat wuz why de name
Tuk sech er root an' growed.

I ain' fergot how we all wuz,
I never gwine fergit;
My book er 'membrance reads ez plain
Ez when it fus' wuz writ.

De folks like you an' me, Marse John,
Dey's few now, mons'us few;
An' therefo', doh de times is change',
Dey shan' change me an' you.

So don' you call me "Brown," Marse John,
Don' say it any mo',
Wid my white-folks I don' name dat,
I jes' is "Uncle Joe."

LITTLE MISTISS.

"Little Mistiss," hyer I is,
  Ize settin' by yo' grave.
I sees de shadows dance an' play
  Jes' time de cedars wave.
I sees 'em, an' it calls to min'
  How full o' play you was,
An' studyn' 'bout de like o' dat
  Mos' breaks my heart, it does.

"Little Mistiss," spring's done come;
  De sky is cl'ar an' blue;
De birds is singin' all de songs
  Dey sung las' year to you;
Dey sings like dey wan' cheer me up,
  But while I hoe de corn
De win' keep whisperin' in de pines—
  "De little Mistiss gone."

De a'r is full o' sweetness now;
  De blooms is on de trees,
An' roun' de honey-suckle vine
  I heahs de buzzin' bees.
De grass is long an' sof' an' green,
  An' ev'y growin' thing
I's puttin' out an' 'pearin' like
  It know'd dat dis was spring.

Tain' so wid me, nor dat it aint,
Dyars some'n says to me,
Dat doh de spring's done come ag'in,
Tain' what it use' to be.
I feels like winter still was hyer;
It's mons'us hard to l'arn
Dat spring can come, and flowers can bloom
Wid "Little Mistiss" gone.

I misses, out de new plow' groun',
De tracks o' little feet;
De echoes 'spondin' through de woods
Yo' laugh, so clear an' sweet;
Yo' han', whar use' to cotch hol' mine,
An lemme lead you 'long
De big ole lorg stretch' 'cross de creek
Whar you was 'feared wan' strong.

You don' go wid me fer de cows,
An' walk right by my side,
Or come home on ole Brindle's back
Jes' like you use' to ride.
I miss you ev'ywhar I turns;
Still I fergit you's gone,
An' 'spec's to see you any time
Come runnin' through de corn.

An' doh Ize dis'p'inted heap,
I listens for de soun'
An' 'lows dat ef you ain' right dyar
You's somewhar playin' roun'.
I knows dat I gwi' see yo' face,
I knows I'll heah yo' voice,
Kase some'n you done tol' me 'bout
Is made dis heart rejoice.

I think I heahs you sing dat hymn
'Bout Jesus byarin' sin,
An' how he's tol' 'em at de gates
To let po' sinners in.
An' doh ole Satan 'rassle like
He wan' to fling me down,
Ize sho dat when de fight is done
Ize gwine to git my crown.

MAMMY'S CHARGE.

My heart is mos' broke, Judy, an' my haid is achin' bad,
Dis is de sor'ful's evenin', honey, dat I is ever had.
Dey knowed I love dat dear sweet chile, an' now her Mummer's daid
Dey could trus' her ole black mammy fer ter treat her good, dey said.

So dey lef' me in de nu's'ry fer ter keep de chile up dyar,
But I still could heah de service, an' de preacher read de pra'r;
De chile too kotch de singin', an' de tears I had ter hide,
When, in play she kep' on 'peatin', "O Lord, wid me abide."

When de fune'al it wuz over, an' de hearse wuz driv' away,
I try might'ly fer ter 'muse her, an' ter keep her dyar at play,
But she 'sist on askin' questions like, "Whar is my Farver gone?
I wants ter see my Mummer; will she stay 'way frum me long?"

I cyar' her ter de winder, an' she look' out in de street,
'Tel she got so tired waitin' dat she went right fas' asleep;
But I set dyar in de twilight an' I hel' de little dear,
'Tel de street wuz on'y darkness, an' de stars begin ter 'pear.

Den one star come out, Judy, whar I never sees befo',
An' I look at it so studdy dat de tears wuz 'bleege ter flow;
Den I tu'n an' see my darlin', in her sleep, begin ter smile;
An de new star seem' a-shinin' right down upon de chile.

AFTER THE WAR.

Good mornin'! Ize 'Lijer, Marse William—
I hopes you is well, Suh, terday.
Ize needin' er pyar er de ole shoes
You's study'n' 'bout flingin' erway.

Ain' got none! Well dat is er pity.
Now what is I gwine fer ter do?
'Tain' showin' my 'spec' fer "Ole Marster"
Ter walk er-roun' hyer wid one shoe.

Er-knowin' dat one er his sarvants
Whar done fer him all dat he could.
Was gwine er-roun' beggin' dis hyer way,
He'd turn in de grave, dat he 'ud.

I dunno how 'tis, Marster William—
I don' 'pear ter fit in no whar,
I gits wid de new issue niggers,
But sholy, my people ain' dyar.

Dey dresses jes' like dey wuz monkeys;
Dey quarrels an' gits inter fights;
Dey stands in de way er de ladies,
An' claims dat dey's 'sertin' dey rights.

Dey talks mighty heap erbout larnin';
  Dey mek out ole niggers is fools—
I lay I could tek an' spen' money
  On some'n heap better'n schools.

Young niggers ain' needin' no teachin'
  Like ole uns needs vittals an' meat—
I tell you, sence gittin' my freedom,
  Ize scrambled fer some'n ter eat.

Den too, Suh, jes' look at de white-folks—
  Dey's changin' frum what dey once wuz;
Er-tryin' so hard ter mek money
  Dey loses dey manners, dey duz.

I ax 'em fer some'n ernother;
  Dey look like dey'd bite me in two,
Dey tell me, "Go long ter de po'-house,
  We ain' gwine be pester'd wid you."

I looks roun' fer some dem whar know'd me,
  But, Marster, I finds dat dey's gone—
I call out de names like I use' ter,
  But nothin' 'cep' echoes den 'spon'.

Dey's sleepin' in graves at de "ole place,"
  An' hyer dey has left me behin'—
I wish I wuz res'in' 'longside 'em,
  It 'pears like it's time I wuz gwine.

THE RACE QUESTION.

When I wuz young de color'd folks
  Wuz 'low'd ter lay de bricks;
Dey climbed de scaffolds, toted hods,
  An' made de mortar mix.

Dey'd handle hammers, saws an' planes,
  An' any tools dey'd choose—
It wan' no folks 'cep' niggers den
  Whar use' ter half-sole shoes.

In dem dyar times 'twuz nigger backs
  Whar gave de scythes de swing;
'Twuz big, black, shiny nigger arms
  Whar made de anvils ring.

An' settin' on de wooden horse
  Wid staves betwix' dey laigs,
Wid drawin' knives an' hic'ry poles
  De niggers hooped de kaigs.

You couldn' fin' no barber shop
  Dat we-all folks wan' dyar—
De little ones er-shinin' shoes,
  The big ones cuttin' hyar.

Wid high up gem'man names print' on
De mugs er-settin' roun';
Er heap o' niggers made dey piles
Frum shaves an' breshin' down.

But 'tain' so now, nor dat it aint,
De white-folks cuts us out;
Dey jumps right in an' gits de wuk
'Fo' we knows what dey's 'bout.

Dey 'trac's de trade—dem out-land folks—
Dem 'Talians, Dutch, an' Greeks,
Aldo' 'tain' none whar understands
De 'spressions whar dey speaks.

Dey shaves an' shampoos all day long,
Dey never, never stops—
Dey don' pick banjers fer dey fr'en's,
An' cake-walk in de shops.

De Orishman is wuss er all—
Jes' time er nigger nod,
He step right up an' shev' him down
An' grab er hol' his hod.

An' den de Unions layin' bricks,
  Dey hollers out ter Mike—
"Ef dat dyar nigger gits dat hod,
  We-all is gwine ter strike."

Den ev'y body on de job
  Er-j'inin' in de fray,
Jes' tells de niggers, up an' down,
  Ter go 'long out de way.

De bosses don' cyar nothin' 'tall;
  Dey say we's mighty slow;
Dey kinder laugh an' 'lows it's time
  De nigger got ter go.

An' ef we turns den ter de farms,
  Whar we had ought ter been,
We dyar gwine find some big machines
  Fer us ter buck erg'in.

Dey's took an' drove out all de scythes—
  I 'clar, it is er crime
Ter reap, wid one dem whirlin' things,
  De whole crop at er time.

I know we's gittin' mighty larned—
Folks say we's making has'e;
Dyar's heap o' sass an' argyment
'Bout "Progress er de Race."

I 'lows we' settin' up de tree—
De nigger's on er boom—
But I wan' know whar 'bouts is I
Gwine git some elbow room.

Er-study'n' 'bout one question, Suh,
Nigh bu'sts my brain 'jints loose.
"Is niggers now er-cotchin' holt,
Er is dey off de roos'?"

RECONSTRUCTION.

I know dey tuk de bottom rail
  An' put it on de top,
But, ever sence, dat's been de rail
  Ter whittle on an' chop.

De men whar tuk an' put it dyar
  Know'd niggers ain' got sense;
Dey fix it so jes' dey deyselves
  Could set 'pon top de fence.

Dey open carpet-bags up dyar,
  Dey eat up all de pies,
An' wuss den dat, dey done it too,
  Right 'fo' de niggers' eyes.

So many folks set on dat rail
  It soon got mighty bent,
An' 'bout dat time er some'n' 'curred
  Whar wan' no axerdent.

De white rail crope frum 'neath de fence—
  It hit de black—ker-flop!
An' time de nigger cotch his sense
  De top *wuz* on de top.

I don' wan' be no top rail now;
  De bottom suits dis chile—
Ize study'n how ter be de las'
  Whar's flung inter de pile.

I teks an' lets de white-folks 'lone;
  I don' wan' make no slips—
De black rail buttin' 'g'inst de white
  Mout git pick' up in chips.

THE PESSIMIST.

Nor Suh, de times ain' what dey wuz,
  An' dey's gittin' mighty bad;
De craps is all done bu'nt right up,
  An' de chills is de wuss we's had;
You cyarn' git money out er nobody hyer,
  An' de folks keeps gwine ter law;
Ain' nothin' 'tall in de county, Suh,
  Like 'twuz "befo' de War."

Niggers is edgycated now,
  An' dey ain' gwine wuk no moh;
Dey holds dey haid so mons'us high
  Dey don't wan' tech de hoe;
Dey sets on de fence an' talks all day,
  An' dey'll gin you sass an' jaw;
Dey ain' got de 'spect fer de white-folks, Suh,
  Whar dey had "befo' de War."

De fox an' de mink eats all de hens,
  An' de horgs root holes in de road;
Dat blame' ole mule bus' de gyarden fence,
  An' de rats gnaw' inter de boa'd;
De crows dey comes an' steal all de corn—
  Dyar now, you kin hyer 'em caw;
It 'pears dat de critters is meaner, Suh,
  Den dey wuz "befo' de War."

'Tain' no peaches in de orchard dis year,
  An' de turnips is de size o' er ball,
An' Ize sartin sho', if de weather keeps up,
  De 'bacca gwine be ruin' 'fo' de fall;
De watermillons dey ain' no count,
  Dey's smalles' I ever saw;
Don' none de things grow big hyer, Suh,
  Like dey did "befo' de War."

RUMINATIONS.

Er-ramblin' down de road er life
You's got ter 'counter storm an' strife;
So tote 'long wid you some de balm
What he'ps ter keep men's sperits calm.
Nor, 'tain' no dram
Dat meks folks r'ar,
It's 'bacca, Sah.

Den when de times is pretty hard,
An' you ain' got no fr'en'ly pard,
An' crops is gittin' wuss and wuss,
An' you's erfeared you's gwine ter bus',
An' want ter cuss—
Right dyar, instid,
Bite off er quid.

Or ef de gal you's courted heap,
Yawns 'fo' yo' eyes an' draps ter sleep,
An' by de time you say, "Good-bye,"
You's flung so fur an' kicked so high
You want ter die—.
De time is ripe
Ter light er pipe.

An' when de boss has call' you in,
An' starts lambastin' wid his chin,
  An' says yo' wuk is mons'us po',
  An' he don' want you any mo',
    You's got ter go—
    Jes' tek er chaw,
    An' let him jaw.

An' ef de doctor say ter you:
"Quit all de things you want ter do;
  Quit drinkin' any drink dat's good,
  Quit eatin' ev'y kind er food,
    You starve de germs out er yo' blood."
    Den, brother, shout,
    "I'll *smoke* 'em out."

CONTENTMENT.

Gimme fus' er wood fire
  Fer ter toas' my shin,
Gimme nex' a big chair
  Fit fer res'in' in.

Gimme den my houn' dorg
  Settin' down by me;
Fill up full my jimmy-john—
  Full as full can be.

Lemme me pick my banjer,
  Lemme eat my pone,
Lemme me smoke my cob-pipe,
  Den—jes lemme 'lone.

THE POINT OF VIEW.

Brer Possum he kin lick Brer Coon,
Brer Coon kin lick Brer Houn',
An' ev'ybody knows Brer Houn'
Kin bring Brer Possum down.

Er nigger frum er sideshow, once,
He come an' say ter me:
"We's got er possum, houn', an' coon
Fer our menagerie.

We cotch 'em out hyer in de woods
When we wuz haulin' lorgs,
An' we's in min' ter raise 'em up
Like edgycated horgs.

We wants ter teach 'em how ter march,
We'd give mos' anything
Ef dey would march like soldiers does,
Jes dem three in er ring.

We puts Brer Possum 'fo' Brer Houn',
'Hin' Brer Houn', Brer Coon step;
Dat brings Brer Possum 'hin' Brer Coon,
An' den we hollers—'*Hep!*'

Brer Houn' he grabs Brer Possum's tail,
Brer Possum don' tu'n roun';
Instid he grabs er-holt Brer Coon,
Brer Coon he grabs Brer Houn'.

Wid all dem critters holdin' holt,
Jes' time Brer Possum squeal
De whole caboodle's j'ined in one,
An' whirlin' like er wheel.

Now, Ize done come ter ax you, Suh,
Whar is er man o' peace,
How can we 'range dem critters so
Dat fightin's gwine ter cease?"

I up, an' tol' dat circus man:
"Ize glad dat you's come 'roun';
I'll tek dis 'casion fer ter 'splain,
An' also fer ter 'spoun'.

Brer Possum he kin lick Brer Coon,
  Brer Coon kin lick Brer Houn',
Still ev'ybody knows Brer Houn'
  Kin fotch Brer Possum down.

De on'y way you gwine have peace,
  Is so ter mek 'em front,
Dat ev'y critter's gwine ter see
  Er giant 'stead o' runt.

De wildes' critters in de woods
  Is got dis tex' in min',
"When danger's gwine on befo'
  Don' never look behin'."

I tol' you I wuz gwine ter 'splain,
  An' likewise fer ter 'spoun',
You'll never git dem critters right
  Untwel you tu'ns 'em 'roun'.

Brer Possum skeered Brer Houn' gwine bite,
  Brer Coon ain' gwin'ter fail
Ter 'member 'bout what happens when
  He tech Brer Possum's tail.

An' ole Brer Coon 'pear ter Brer Houn'
Er lion in de paf;
So when he see him he gits col',
Like niggers in er baf.

De 'rangement, possum, houn', an' coon
Is gwin'ter stan' fer war.
De 'rangement, possum, coon, an' houn'
Gwine stan' fer peace an' law.

So when de critters in de camp
Is itchin' fer er fight,
Jes' 'range each one ter come behin'
De wrong one fer ter bite.

An' time you does, dem fightin' beasts
Will see what dey gwine see,
An' change dey looks 'twel dey looks like
Faith, Hope, an' Charity."

So den I 'nounce dis mighty tex',
Doh it ain' nothin' new,
Ter be fer peace er be fer war
'Pends on de point o' view.

THE DUCK

I sho' will tell de gorspel truth, 'cordin' de oath I tuk,
You don' spose I gwine tell a lie, jes' fer ter git er duck?
Besides, I don' need tell no lie when truth will sarve de same,
Kase mine sho' is de righteous cause—dat nigger ain' got no claim.

'Tis dis er way I got dat duck. Me an' dat gal er mine
Was eatin' millons in de yard an' flingin' 'way de rine,
An' dat dyar duck keep peepin' twix' de palin's er de fence,
An' den it traspass in de yard—it stay dyar ever sence.

It wan' no bigger'n my fis' when fus' it come in dyar,
An' one de laigs wuz crimp up so dey didn' look like a pyar;
It had de yaller feathers still, an' kinder shet one eye,
An' when I see it standin' dyar, I say, *"Dat duck gwine die."*

I never did lodge no complaint, I did'n' wan' raise
no fuss;
But when it peered so mighty sick, an' gittin' wuss
an' wuss,
I sorter s'picioned how some time great trouble I
gwine see
Jes' kase I 'lowed dat sickly duck ter come an'
live on me.

It sleep right underneath de house an' eat all
kind er truck,
An' my ole 'ooman doctored it, an' Mimy nussed
de duck.
Dat gal los' edycashun, Suh, she acted like a
fool;
Fer ev'y time de duck got sick she stay erway
frum school.

I ain' no lawyer, but I knows dat I kin argyfy.
Ef dat ar nigger says I steals, I tells him he's er lie.
I gwine hev justice in dis case—some questions
I wan' ax,
An' ef he thinks dat he's so smart, jes' let him
'spute de facts.

When niggers creeps inter de yard, an' totes de
ducks away,
De p'leeceman cyar 'em ter de cage, an' dyar dey
got ter stay;

But, sposen doh, I has er fence, an' dat man's duck bus' through
An' steals tomatis off de vine—den what de law gwine do?

An' when de duck come traspassin' in dat ar yard er mine,
It wan' no use ter warrant it, fer who gwine pay de fine?
Fer all de time dat duck stay dyar, nigh on six months an' moh,
Dat nigger got ter pay de boa'd, an' dat is sartin sho'.

I tells him I gwine charge him too, fer physic dat it tuk,
An' edycashun my gal los' er nussin' er de duck.
I counts in all de heaps er cyars an' sponsibility
Er keepin' dat ar sickly duck dat he shove off on me.

Dyar's one 'lustration I wan' make—Yes Suh, I mos' is through—
How Solomon, de King, he say, "Jes chop de chile in two!"
An' ef you bleeged ter split dat duck, ter foller jestice' paf,
I makes de pint, *I fatten it, an' claims de bigges' half.*

THE KING CORN MAN.

I teks dis 'casion fer ter rise
An' 'nounce *I'll* git de "King Corn Prize,"
  Whar's offered fer de bigges' corn;
  Bekase ez sho' ez you is born
Ize got de very bigges' ear
Dat folks is ever see 'roun' hyer.

An' I wan' tell you too, my brother,
Dat I ain' nary farmer nother.
  I never wuz no country man,
  Nor ploughed de smalles' patch er lan'.
I couldn' tell er' bacco seed
Frum dat whar grows de Jimson-weed.

But still I sez ter you, "Dorg-gone,
Ef I don' git dat prize fer corn."
  Soon ez I heah 'bout dat ar prize
  I scratch my haid an' shet my eyes,
An' study out de champion plan
Fer crownin' me de "King Corn Man."

Ize done heah tell dat 'long de streams,
In special, Suh, de "noble Jeems,"
  De farmer folks, fer heap er years,
  Been settin' out de roas'in'-ears;
An' so I say right dyar: "Dorg-gone,
Ef I don' 'zamine all dat corn."

So den I took it, foot-in-han',
An' start' ter tromp de farmin' lan',
  Untwel de low-groun's show' my track
  From Botetourt ter Accomac.
An' doh er heap o' snakes I see',
An' farmers' dorgs got arter me,

An', hyer an dyar, erlong de route
I stop' ter git de chiggers out,
  An' I pass' thro' er mess er crops
  Wid ears like dem de chillun pops,
I never see' er great big ear
I didn' stole it fer "de Fyar."

Now, what's de good er puttin' on
Dem big-bug men ter jedge folks' corn
  When ev'y farmer, brought ter scratch,
  Gwi' bring de leavin' er his patch?
While I, de King's got hyer ter show
De bigges' corn dat each kin grow.

Pears like, ter me, dat's was'in' talk;
De corn's been jedged, Suh, on de stalk.
  An' so I seys ergin, "Dorg-gone,
  Ef *I* don' git dat prize fer corn."

THE TRAVELERS.

My brothers, we's er trav'lin' like de critters in de Ark,
An' er part de time it's daylight, an' er part de time it's dark,
An' de ocean's dyar ter git us ef we don' stick ter de ship,
So we goes wid fear an' trim'lin' fer de mos' part o' de trip.

We lives in little cages whar we daily walks er-roun',
An' we sometimes has de 'spicion dat we's gittin' over groun',
But time we tek our byarin's an' we ca'culate de sum,
We finds de place we 'rives at is de place frum whar we come.

Like owls some totes dey wisdom in de faces whar dey meks,
An' gits er name fer larnin' kase dey eyebrows look like specks,
Dey can do er lot er screechin' when dey's talkin' 'bout de night,
But dey sets an' don' say nothin' when de time has come fer light.

Dyar's some whar's like de tigers—mons'us res'less in de cage,
An' de things whar's sent ter hol' 'em is de things whar mek 'em rage,
'Stead er gittin' down ter business an' er-playin' in de show,
Dey's er-chawin' at de i'on an' er-pawin' at de doh.

Den er heap is like de monkies whar is clim'in' fer de top,
An' de other monkies grab 'em, an' dey try ter mek 'em stop,
But de waves o' tribulation give de ship er migh.ty lurch
An' de mess o' clim'in' monkies come er tum'lin' off de perch.

Dyar is some whar 'sembles goslin's in de way dey march behin'
De ones whar goes befo' 'em, doh dey don' know whar dey's gwine;
Jes' steppin' in de goose-tracks er de father goes de son,
An' he never does do nothin' dat his daddy didn' done.

Yas, we's mighty like dem critters whar was trav'lin' in de Ark,
De top-deck ones is frozen an' de bottoms in de dark,
An' de middles dey is 'spicious dat de vittals won' go roun',
So dey watches all dey neighbors kase dey's feared dey'll fling em down.

We's er-floatin' an' er-drif'in', but we's bleege ter reach de sho',
An we knows de time is comin' when it ain' gwine rain no mo',
When we'll see de lighthouse shinin' by de wharf o' Ararat,
An' we'll look down frum de mountain an' we'll know whar we is at.

I rec'on den de top-decks gwine ter thaw er little bit;
De bottoms, down in darkness, gwine be lifted out de pit;
De middles won' be scramblin' an' er-scufflin' in de pen,
But dey'll roam roun' in de gyarden an' dey'll git er plenty den.

I rec'on den de monkies will be 'lowed ter clim' up high,
De owls gwine tek ter smilin' kase dey'll see de sunny sky,
De tiger gwine be quiet an' as frien'ly as de cat
When de rain it quits er rainin' an' we gits ter Ararat.

DE POT WHAR CALL' DE KITTLE BLACK.

De pot, whar call' de kittle black,
Look' in de glass an' tuk it back.
  He saw hisself dat he wan' bright,
  An' so he say:—"On secon' sight,
I don' b'leeve dat dyar kittle's black,
It looks like me, an' dat's er fac';
  An' I spec' too, Ize gwine ter fin'
  Ole kittle's heart is 'bout like mine."

We ain't er-wearin' on de face
De happy, shiny look o'grace,
  Kase axerdent an' sarcumstance
  Done lead us sich er devil's dance,
We's got on us er coat o' paint
Whar meks us look like what we aint;
  Ther'fo', o' course, dis row done riz
  'Bout what we aint an' what we is.

We'd like ter shine up in de light
Like table things whar's clean an' white,
  An' kep' erway frum all de grime;
  But me an' kittle, mos' de time,
Is got ter set wid coal an' coke
An' fire an' flame an' dus' an' smoke;
  Wid burnin's out an' bilin's in
  We git ter look like home-made sin.

But, how-some-never way we look,
We face de fire an' we cook
  Jes' like we's put hyer fer ter do,
  An' on de fire we sing some too;
But easy times wa'n' made fer us,
We's doin' well ef we don' bus'.

Now, dat dyar plate thinks she's all right,
Er-settin' dyar, an' lookin' white.
  She ain' done nothin' all de day
  'Cep' settin' lookin' dat dyar way;
Jes' waitin' fer ter grab er hol'
O' what we cooks, befo' it's col',

An' tote it whar de folks kin see,
Er-sayin':—"Now, jes' look at me!
  What splendid vittals I is got,
  Er-bringin' ter you, pipin' hot!
I hope dat you gwine 'preciate
De mighty labor o' de plate."

An' dyar an' den dat sassy liar,
What never face no smoke er fire,
  Gits all de praise fer what is et—
  De produce o' our wuk an' sweat—
An' folks all 'lows dat glory great
Is what's done fer 'em by de plate.

Dey don' see nothin' 'bout de pot;
Him an' de kittle's lef' fergot.
An' so it is, jes' like I say,
"Good looks gwine git de praise terday."
But I wan' ax, wid pain an' sorrow,
Whar 'bouts dat plate gwine be termorrow?

Jes' let her git off dat dyar shelf,
An' start ter circulate herself
In all dis kitchen mix an' mess,
She gwine have 'ventures. I be bless
Ef she don' fin' dis worl' is rough,
An' dem whar's in it mighty tough.

An' few dyar be whar don' git bent
By sarcumstance an' axerdent.
One time de fire scotch her back
You'll see her wrinkle up an' crack,
An' all dat face whar use' ter shine
In ev'y spot gwine sho' de line

Whar tribulation tuk an' tromp,
An' stomp' his hoof an' lef' er stomp.
Hyer now! Ize talkin' 'bout de plate
Jes' like I done 'bout my bes' mate,
Ole kittle, when I call him black,
An' doin' it behin' her back.

Kin I jedge what she ought ter be?
Ain' we made different, her an' me?
I tek back mos' de things I said.
Poor plate! She mighty tender made,
An' still she always got ter shine.
'Tain' none de people gwine ter min'
De pot's face showin' some de sut,
But let er plate git jes' one smut,

Somebody's sartin sho' ter shout,
"Dat plate is dirty, take her out!"
An' arter dat her only hope
Is in de wash-rag an' de soap;
An' even den, folks is so mean,
Dey axes, "Does you 'spec' she's clean?"
Ef once she slip, an' has er fall—
Good-bye forever, an' ter all.

Dyar 'tis, she's crush'—er mighty smash—
An' ev'ybody's heah'd de crash,
An' dem whar's nigh her gits de broom
An' sweeps her quick, right out de room,
An' hides her twell she pass erway
Wid all de ashes an' de clay.
De pot whar call' de kittle black
Look' in de glass an' tuk it back.

MONOLOGUES

AUNT DINAH AT THE FAIR.

Well, I declar', ef dyar ain' Jane! I didn' know she
wuz hyer.
Oh! come 'long, Son, stan' out de way—you'll git run
over, Suh!
It 'pears like we ain' got no rights when sech as dis
is 'lowed,
An' good-fer-nothin'-po'-white-trash come ridin'
through de crowd.

Hi Jane! Oh, Jane! Hyer! Hyer we is! Jes'
shove yo' way 'long through.
Well, I is s'prized ter see you hyer. Malviny, how
you do?
Why, Lor', how dat ar gal is grow'd—she might'ly
like her Pa—
But den she got de likely looks in 'zemblance ter
her Ma.

How's all? Is Uncle Samson up, an' Sary Ann
got well?
Is little Job done 'covered frum dat cur'ous sickly
spell?
Ef he don' git erlong an' mend, it cert'ny 'pears ter
me,
Ef I wuz you, I'd gin dat chile er dose o' sass'fras tea.

You say dat Uncle Samson got de mis'ry in de face?
Why don' you git some Jimson-weed an' rub it on de place?
Den ef brown-kitis troubles him, I'd cure him, dat I 'ud;
I'd mek him smoke dry mullein leaves—dey's done me heap er good.

How long you been hyer? Is you seen de light-bread an' de cake?
Well, 'tain' no 'count—it 'pears like, now, folks don' know how ter bake.
De pies an' things is jes' as bad; de Fyar gits wuss an' wuss.
I thought Malviny's quilt de bes'. I say so frum de fus'.

Nor, I don' 'zibit nothin' 'tall—dey don' like color'd folks.
At ev'y thing dat I wan' sen' de white-folks laughs an' jokes.
I sen' some 'simmons fer ter show; dey eat up all de pile,
Den say dey don' show 'simmons hyer wid produce er de sile.

Jes' now I went ter see de race, but when I cross' de trac'
A p'leeceman cotch right hol' er me, and say, "Git back! Git back!"
I up an' tol' him ter his face ter quit dat bossin' me,
Dat I done pay ter come in hyer, an' I wuz gwine ter see.

Jes' look er dyar—ain' dat er fight? Dat p'leeceman got him doh—
Git out de way! Dat's Washington! Don' hit him any mo'.
He ain' done nothin' 'cep' git drunk. Who pull out all his hyar?
He mos in gin'ral do git drunk when he come ter de Fyar.

You 'bleege' ter cyar him ter de cage fer 'sistin' de p'leece?
Dyar 'tis; he'll be de death er me—I never has no peace.
I s'posen, now, ter git him out, Ize got ter pay de cos'—
Good gracious! Whar is Little Joe! I know'd he gwine git los'!

DAT BOY

Good mornin', Sister, how you does? You wan' at
chu'ch las' night?
Oh, things wuz 'citing' dyar, one time I thought
folks gwine ter fight.
'Twas all erlong er dat dyar boy, Sis Mandy Jones's
son.
I'd w'ar my chillun out if dey had done what he
done done.
He walk in, all so solemn like, an' den what mus'
he do,
But tek an' sot hisself right down jes' back o' Bro'
Smith's pew.

I wuz dat s'prized I couldn't talk, but Jane say, "I
declar!
What is de Jones boy doin' in de 'Amen Cornder'
dyar?"
He sing straight long jes' like de res', an' come in
wid de bass,
Till arfter 'while I kinder 'lowed he wan' no harden'
case.
An' Jane, she say, "I b'lieves he's 'formed an' wan'
ter do de right.
You heah me, Ma, he gwine be on de Mourner's
Bench ternight."

Well, things wuz peaceful in de chu'ch, an' Jasper
'gin ter preach;
He 'splain, an' 'spoun', an' talk right long, kase
souls is hard ter reach.
'Twan' nothin' 'tall Bro' Smith wan' heah, doh it
wuz larn' an' deep;
So Bro' Smith lean' er-ginst de pos', an' went right
fas' asleep.
I heah er soun', same ez er breeze er-blowin' through
er tree,
It 'peared ter come onreg'lar like—Cow-oo! Co-wo-o!
Co-we-e!

It 'trac' folks' notice, an' I tu'n an' say, "Hi, what
wuz dat?"
But Jane tell me de fuss come frum de place Bro'
Smith wuz at.
Bro' Jasper frown', an' look' right mad; I thought
he gwine ter say,
"Jes' rouse dat deacon er de chu'ch, he mustn' sno'
dat way."
But he kep' on, he didn' stop, de "Fourthly" wuz
de nex';
He 'splain' dat studyin' 'stronomy helps 'lucidate de
tex'.

Den come er fuss—er lot er snorts like horgs wuz rootin' roun',
An' 'fo' I knowed it I done 'sclame, "Dat's Bro' Smith, I be boun'!"
An' Lindy Smith, she 'spec' so too, 'bout dat dey ain' no doubt;
She wan' draw 'tention off her Pa, dat's why she 'gin ter shout;
But time she start, Jane up an' say: "Dyar he, I seed him sho'!
Jes' soon ez Mister Smith wuz 'sleep dat boy commence ter sno'!

He set back dyar, an' when Bro' Smith done let his haid fall down,
Dat good-fer-nothin'-low-life boy prepyar ter mek er soun'."
Den Bro' Smith riz, an' grab dat boy, he cotch him by de hyar,
He didn' wait till chu'ch buss up, he frail him down right dyar.
Dat rascal 'rassle all his might, he kick Bro' Smith's shin bone;
He holler, "Quit dat hittin' me!" an' "Whyn't you lemme 'lone!"

He paw, an' bite, an' carry on rampageous ez er colt,
But 'twa' no use o' doin' dat, Bro. Smith jes' hilt his holt;
An' Bro'er Smith he tell dat boy he gwine ter have him know
He ain' ter put dat mouf o' hisn in folks affyars no mo';
An' ef he is afeard ter die, an' wan' ter keep his helf,
He'll let de sleepers in de chu'ch do snorin' fer dey-self.

THE MARCH OF THE LODGES.

Dey's comin', holdin' up dey haids, er-lookin' sorter proud;
Dey's comin', wid de horn an' fife er-blowin' mighty loud;
Dey's steppin' kinder solemn like an' marchin' ter de chune—
Oh! dis hyer is de funerul uv er ve'y 'portant coon.

De music whar dey's steppin' ter is got de mournful wail
Whar makes er sickly nigger turn er I'sh-potato pale.
"Flee like er bird ter de mountain" 's what dey play,
But huc-come I know dis yer bird is flyin' dat er way?

De "Swarthy Hos' er Israel" is 'vancin' mighty gran',
But natchally dey's doin' dat, dey's jes' behin' de ban';
An' dem whar totes de little books is "Scribes er Galilee,"
Dey allus 'scorts de banner-man, de "Famous Pharisee."

My gracious! Ain' he puff' up heap wid 'portance
er hisself,
He better slacken up de belt befo' he hurt his helf.
I ain' no sayin' he ain' strong, aldo' he sho' is
fat—
Man, Suh! dat is a portly place de flag-staff's
res'in' at.

But dat ar' gem'man so het up, er-totin' er de mace,
Whar got de sperspiration streams er-runnin' down
his face,
He is de bigges' boss er all—his name is Mr. Sam—
His titlement is "Fountain Head er Risin' Sons
er Ham."

Yas, dat is Sister Lindy Smith er-ridin' in de hack.
I see de collar er de lodge is wrop er-roun' her na'k.
She washes fur "de Quality," an' ev'y whar she
goes
She loosens up de starch fur 'em by w'arin' er dey
clos'.

But look er dyar at little Lige!—Jes' watch him
cotch de step—
Ef he's er-gwine all de way I lay he got ter hep.
Dem pants er his is heap too big, dey's roun' his
shoes, dey is;
Ef I was him I'd res' er spell, an' h'ist my galluses.

Nor Suh! I ain't erfeared ter die—Ize done prepyar
ter go,
I got er lot er 'ligion now an' gwin'ter git some mo';
And when de S'ieties Ize j'ined turn out ter bury
me,
Dey won' leave cooks enough at wuk ter git de
white-folks' tea.

SPEECH OF DE REV. GABRIEL GIZZARDFORT ON DE CELEBRATION OF DE FOURTEENTH COMMANDMENT.

My Bretheren an' Sisteren, now wharfo' is we come
Er-gatherin' tergether at de beatin' er de drum,
Korvortin' roun' de city streets, an' marchin' ter de squar;
I tek, an' ax you once ergain, what is we doin' dyar?
We's had er mighty big parade, an' gwines to an' fro,
We's hollered fittin' fer ter buss de walls er Jericho;
An' now, while we's er-settin' down, an' ladies, in de hacks,
Is fotchin' bags an' baskets out an' fixin' up de snacks,
Befo' partakin' er de pies, er eatin' er de aigs,
Er succulation on de souse, er chewin' chicken laigs,
Befo' de liquordation er de kaigs er lemonade
I ax you, p'intedly, *wharfo'* is dis hyer gran' parade?
It ain' no use ter answer me. Dat question's on'y me'nt
Ter set er-gwine dis hyer speech, an' p'int de argyment.

De preacher is de on'y one ter 'rassle wid de fac's,
An' 'splore, an' 'splain, an' spatify de questions whar he ax.
Perceedin' therefo', Bretheren, I 'nounces ter yo' face
De titlement er dis hyer speech is "Progress er de Race."
An' in consideration er de takin' er de tex'
De 'terpertation er de same is natchally de nex'.
What signicates de 'scription er de 'spression you is heard?
"De Progress er de Race" is sho' er mighty p'inted word.
It 'zibits dat we's movin' on—mozeing ev'ywhar—
Er-stoppin' jes' ter res' er spell, an' den perceedin' dyar;
It misticates de 'nouncement er how high we gwin'ter rise,
But hyer we is, pas' Jordan's stream, wid Canaan 'fo' our eyes.
We's heah'd de trump er freedom blow, an follerin' de soun'
We seen er mighty rootin' up, an' heap er drappin' down.
De wicked, like de green bay tree, is troubled wid er crash;
De proud er heart done fly befo' great flingin' up er trash.

De prodigal whar tended horgs an' tuk an' eat de hus'
Is fyarly travellin' down de road, an' kickin' up de dus'.
He smell de cookin' far erway, 'an 'cep' he break er shaf',
He gwine git home 'fo' supper time, an' eat de golden calf.
Yas, tek de mule, hitch up yo' team, grab hol' de drivin' line;
Don' be erfeared er spillin' out, jes' go 'long whar you gwine.
Rejoice I say, my Bretheren—my Sisteren rejoice—
Go git yo' harps like David done, an' mek er joyful noise.
Behol' an' lo, de bottom rail is whar de folks kin see;
De yaller dorg is nosein' roun' whar p'inters used ter be.
De coons ain' scared er nothin' 'tall, an' sho'ly ez you born,
De coal black crows is cawin' loud an' pickin' up de corn.
Yea verily, we's frisky now, we kinder feels our oats,
An' ev'ywhar dyar's heap er folks what want ter buy our votes.
Up in New York an' Boston, too, dey's sellin' mighty nice,

But roun' 'bout Philadelphia we gits de bigges' price.
So what de use er stayin' hyer whar 'tain' no chance ter trade;
I allus leaves at 'lection time, an' gits my 'spenses paid
At all de polls in dat dyar place, de town er Brother's Love,
I changes coats, I gits er name, an' gives a vote er shove.

ASTRONOMICAL OBSERVATIONS.

You see dem niggers walkin' dyar, dey's all jes' gwine one way,
Dey 'spec' ter heah Ole Jasper preach erbout de Sun ter-day.
What! you ain' larn de sun do move, and Jasper 'splain all dat?
Well, you sho' ain' no Richmond man! Wharbouts *is* you live at?

When ole man Jasper 'nounce de tex'—he allus does dat fus'—
He looks so full er argyment you 'spec' his haid gwine bus';
But when he 'rassle wid larn' folks he jes' onloose his tongue,
An' show he got de underholt, an' dem folks gwine git flung.

My gal, Malindy's one dem kind; she's done been ter de school,
An' claim she's studied 'stronomy, an' Jasper is er fool.
She 'lows dat she's too good ter wuk—dat shows what larnin's worf—
She calls de risin' er de sun "rosation er de yearth."

I gin her what John Jasper say, its truth, Suh, I be boun'
Dat ev'ything gwine spill right out ef dis hyer yearth tu'n roun'.
She kinder laugh an' den she 'nounce dat's some'n she kin 'spoun';
It's grabbity, grabs hol' er things when we's tu'n upside down.

I stop her dyar, I 'sputes dat p'int, kase huc-come dat gwine be?
In all de time dat I done 'zis', it ain' grab holt er me.
She love ter projec' wid dem things folks looks through at de stars,
An' dyar wuz one out on de street she claim' wuz p'int at Mars.

I ax de man how much he charge', he say, "Fi' cent fer one."
An' den I look straight up de thing same ez I shoot er gun.
I tuk so long he wan' ter know ef I wan' seein' sights,
But I 'spon' back, dat all I see wuz poles an' 'lec'ric lights.

He tell me, "Ef you'd shet dat eye you'd see er
small red ball."
I shet my eyes, an' time I did, I ain' see nothin'
'tall.
I don' trus' dem dyar enstruments an' men de like
er dat
Whar claims dey 'lustrates stars an' things, an'
cyar'n p'int whar dey's at.

I heah dey measures ter de sun, an' say it's b'ilin'
hot;
I let 'em know I wan' ter see de tape-line whar
dey's got;
An' ef it re'ches ter de sun, I jes' wan' ax 'em den,
Ain' dat hot sun gwine scotch de man whar climb
dyar wid de en'?

Ize cert'ny glad dat Jasper's hyer ter 'splain all
'bout de skies,
Kase ef he wan' er heap er folks would 'cep' dem
mons'us lies.
Ize done convert dat gal er mine; I done it dis er
way,
I gin her all de rope she wan', I let her say her
say,

But t'other mornin' Lindy's ma wuz grumblin' mighty heap,
An' say ter me, "Does you know, Si, dat gal is still ersleep?"
I holler, "Why'nt you git up gal, an' go 'long feed de cow?"
An' I keep thinkin' ter myself, "My patience 'zausted now."

She answer, sorter sleepy like, "It's strange dat you cyar'n see
Dat folks is 'bleege ter sleep right late when study'n' 'stronomy."
I tuk an' fotch er hic'ry switch, an' den, I lay, I prove
Dat when de sun's er-movin' up dat nigger's gwine ter move.

John Jasper, a negro preacher, famous in Virginia for his sermon, "The Sun Do Move."

DAT 'LEC'RIC CYAR.

It ain' no use er-takin' time ter projec' wid er mule,
De man whar does dat in dese days ain' better'n er fool;
Fer things done change, I know dey is, ain' I done see it, Suh?
An' ploughs an' cyarts gwine run erlong jes' like de 'lec'ric cyar.
Don' nothin' pull er shev' dem cyars, an' still dey fyarly fly;
De driver don' say, "Come up, mule!" an' "Gee!" an' "Wah!" an' "Hi!"
I git on one de other day—dat 'speyunce gwine ter las'—
Dey don' suit me, aldo' dey mout dem whar wan' go 'long fas'.
De man whar stan' up in de front he tu'n er kinder thing
Dat look jes' like er grind-stone crank—de bell go ting-er-ling;
Den 'twuz I feel er mons'us juck—it fling me down right flat—
It come so quick I holler out, "My Marster! What wuz dat?"
I up, an' grab er little rope ter keep frum fallin' down,

But ev'y time I pull de rope de bell would mek er soun'.
De en' wuz tie' onter er clock whar didn' run er tick,
But den de han' on dat ar clock would kinder jump down quick.
Er man say, "Leggo dat ar rope, an' lemme have yo' fyar."
He talk so peart I say ter him, "I ain' done nothin', Suh!"
"You is—you's gone an' rung fi' fyars." Dat's what he had ter say.
Two ten cent an' er fi' cent piece I good ez fling erway.
I 'uz pestered kase I pull' dat rope, an' I 'uz skeered too,
Fer some'n underneath de flo' wuz gwine zoo-woo-woo,
I done heah tell dat b'ilers bus', an' ingines runs erway,
An' cyars' chock full er folks an' things, git smash' up ev'y day;
An' dem what don' git kill' right den gits bline an' deef an' dumb—
An' standin' dyar I mighty 'feared dis nigger's time done come.
I tuk an' light out fer de doh, an' on de flatform dyar,

De man wan' stop me, but I say, "Tu'n loose an' gimme a'r!"
I tuk an' jump, but some'n 'peared ter tu'n me roun' an' roun',
An' 'fo' I know it I done made de 'quaintance er de groun'.
I 'uz sorter daze', an' look ter see whar 'bouts my hat done went,
But I wan' hit 'cep' in de haid, an' dat jes' git er dent.
De man whar made dem 'lec'ric cyars, you heah me, wuz "Ole Scratch"—
De fire come poppin' out de wheels same ez you light er match.
An' so it is, jes' like I say, tain' pull' by nothin' 'tall;
Dey's tuk, an' shev', right out de way, de nigger, mule, an all.
An' you's done heah dat prophecy, dat now sho' is come true,
"When white-folks 'spenses wid de mule, de nigger gwine go too."

SEEING THE CIRCUS.

Boom! Boom! Boom! Hi! Don' you heah de drum?
Boom! Boom! Boom! Run hyer! Yarn' dey come!
Tek an' clim' up in de tree. Don' you git no fall,
Kotch er holt like possums does, den you'll see it all.
Boom! Boom! Boom! Dey'll be nigh ter us soon.
Boom! Boom! Boom! Why don' dey play er chune?
Watch dat lady comin' now, man suh! dat's er sight;
All her clos' is made er gol'! Ain' she shinin' bright?
Dat ar gem'man by her side, you heah me, he's de boss,
I knows it kase he 'pears so proud er-settin' on de horse.
Hyer come de ban'! I 'spec' 'twill play, I wants ter heah de crash.
Oh! dat big man whar beats de drum gwine mek dem cimlins clash.
Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Dyar 'tis, Oh, dat's de soun'!

Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Ta-ra! Dey's talkin', I be boun'!

'Tain' none de ban's in dis hyer town kin kick up dat ar fuss.

Dem Dutchmans blowin' er de horns is blowin' fit ter bus'.

Ain' dat er chune dey's playin' doh, dey's got it down right fine.

Ef I could play dem enstruments I lay I'd jine de line.

I wish dat nigger walkin' dyar would tek an' drap de drum,

I'd go an' ax de Cap'n-man ter lemme tote it some.

I'd git in dat ar nigger's coat, I'd look like some'n gran',

I'd cotch de step, an' mark de time same ez er little man.

You heah dem lions in de cage? Dey'd kill folks, dat dey mout,

I hope de doh is lock' up tight, so day ain' gwine git out.

Dey's got de bigges', sharpes' teef dat I is ever see;

I let you know Ize sorter glad Ize settin' up er tree.

Ole elephant gwine flop his ears—he travelin' mons'us slow,

I 'spec' he's got so fat an' big, dat's fas' as he kin go.

Dyar he, right dyar! You mus' be blin'! What
is you talkin' 'bout?
Ain' none de critters got two tails; de fus' tail is
de snout.
What dat de lady on de cage got wrop' all roun'
her naik?
Hyer, drive 'long dyar! Tek dat thing 'way! Good
gracious what er snake!
Don' stop right under dis hyer tree! Oh me, de
lim' done break!
My Marster! Ef I hits de cage *please* lemme 'scape
dat snake!

A FIRE INSURANCE POLICY.

I ain' gwi' fight de devil wid fire;
I don' wan' git no nigher
Den er thousan' mile
Ter de burnin' pile.
Er tar an' pitch an' kerosene ile.
I don' wan' face de congregation
Er all damnation
In conf'igation—
I'd burn ez hot
Ez a light-wood knot.
Er same ez a match
Rubbed 'ginst "Ole Scratch."
Nor Suh, my son,
I teks an' run
Jes' time tem'tation starts de fun.
I ain' de kin'
Ter allus fin'
I kin lick Satan wid strength er min'.

One time "Ole Sin"
Come trompin' in
Wid a glass er gin,
An' he say ter me—
Say he—

"It's time ter begin.
You knows de tas'e an' you knows de smell.
An' you knows mighty well
You's boun' fer Hell;
So drink yo' dram,
An' don' give a dam'.
I cotches yo' eye—Here's ter you, Sam!"
He look at me an' I look at him,
An' I knowed fer sartin my chance wuz slim;
An' den he say—"Oh, don' be 'feared,
'Tain' nothin' 'tall ter mek you skeered.
I wish you wealth, an' I wish you joy—
Come, drink ter de health er 'Mister Ole Boy':
Kotch hol' de glass an' heave-er-hoy."

Den some'n nother said ter me—
"Ef you wan' ter be free
You better mosee.
It ain' no use
Ter mek excuse;
You jes' vamoose,
Kase hyer come Want an' hyer come Doubt
Projec'in' 'bout;
You better light out."
Den, sho's you born,
Dis nigger wuz gone.
He run down de trac'
Wid er clickerty-clac',
He did fer a fac',

He never look back.
An' down ter dis day
When de devil's ter pay
He gits out de way,
An' dat's why he's hyer er sayin' his say.

Thar'fo', good people one an' all,
Harken, an' heah, an' heed de call;
Ac' like er man,
Tek yo' foot in yo' han',
An' run, an' run, an' run, an' run,
An' ef you run
Like I done done
You'll soon fin' out de fight is won.
Er ef you'll run jes' half ez good
Satan won' have no kin'lin' wood,
But back ter Hell he'll have ter turn,
An' say—" 'Tain' nothin' lef' ter burn;
We'll have ter cook wid what dyar is."
An' den, I lay, it ain' no doubt
All perdition's gwine ter shout—
Oh, go 'long 'way! What dat you say?
We's nigh 'bout friz—
Hell fire's tuk an' gone right out."

S0-EXW-486